

# Companion Animal Osteoarthritis

## What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis occurs when the protective cartilage that cushions the ends of the bones wears down. Osteoarthritis can damage any joint, but the most commonly effected joints are the knees, hips, and shoulders. Osteoarthritis causes long-term degeneration of the joints. Osteoarthritis also involves many tissues including: cartilage, bone under the cartilage, joint capsule, and fluid in the joint. Generally, Osteoarthritis is caused by aging or an injury.

## Who can Osteoarthritis effect?

According to a study, 41% of dogs suffered mild pain, 38% suffered moderate pain and 21% suffered severe pain from osteoarthritis. According to a study done by the Texas A&M Veterinary Department, our feline friends over the age of 10 were shown to have signs of pain 100% of the time.

## What can cause Osteoarthritis?

A pet that is overweight may suffer from Osteoarthritis. In addition to their weight a pet that suffers an injury may begin showing the signs of Osteoarthritis. Finally, pets of all ages may see the effects of Osteoarthritis through genetics.

A few ways to help cut out some calories is to measure their food, reduce treats, provide healthier treats (like vegetables), and cut out all people food. It sounds difficult, but it has been proven that pets that are at an ideal weight are living on average 2 years longer than pets that carry around a few extra pounds and have a decreased chance of developing Osteoarthritis.

The right food is also important to weight maintenance. Food companies like Hill's Science Diet, Purina, and Royal Canin are constantly researching how to support the livelihood and longevity of our pets. The top food companies do a significant amount of research and development before releasing a new food. After they release a new food, they continue to do studies to show that the food is working as advertised. If your pet is over the age of 5 to 7 year, then consider switching them to a Senior food because it provides needed nutrients to support joint health along with other health benefits. When changing their food, it is recommended that you keep them on the same brand of food to support the change. If you suspect or know that your pet has joint issues you can try a prescription food specifically formulated for joints. These foods have a lot of omega fatty acids and are nutrient rich to support joint health without having to give numerous, costly supplements.